

Available online at [www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)**SciVerse ScienceDirect**

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 70 (2013) 417 – 422

**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

Akdeniz Language Studies Conference 2012

## Language and gender in political discourse (mass media interviews)

Nurseitova Khalida<sup>a</sup>, Zharkynbekova Sholpan<sup>b</sup>, Bokayev Bauyrzhan<sup>c</sup>, Bokayeva Ainash<sup>d\*</sup><sup>a/b/c/d</sup> 5 Munaitpassova, Astana, 010000, Kazakhstan

### Abstract

In this paper the definition of “political discourse” is presented on the base of review of European, American and Russian scholars. The hypothesis of this article is that communicative behavior is gender identified, and this fact is dictated by the choice of speech markers of explicit and implicit linguistic means at all language levels that presented the feminine features in political discourse. The communicative behavior of Kazakhstani politicians in mass-media political discourse is demonstrated on the base of I. A. Sternin’s model of description in accord with gender aspect taking into consideration. This parametric structure of the communicative behavior model consists of the component, on the ground of which the generalized and detailed data about the specifics of gender communicative behavior are calculated according to eight parameters: communicative self-presentation – theatrical nature, contact emotionality, tolerance, agency, politeness, thematic orientation, power-control and communicative leadership. Methods used in this investigation are political discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, quantitative and qualitative analyses.

© 2012 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).  
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of ALSC 2012

Keywords: political discourse; gender communicative behavior; critical discourse analysis; gender stereotype, leadership, tolerance, agency

<sup>1</sup> Nurseitova Khalida. Tel.: +7-7172-353806; fax: +7-7172-490988.  
E-mail address: [khalnur@gmail.com](mailto:khalnur@gmail.com).

## 1. Introduction

In modern linguistics one of the foreground tasks in the investigation of political discourse is the study of communicative behavior as an integral component of description the national, group and identity cultures. Under “the communicative behavior” we understand the set of norms and traditions of people communication, age, professional and other groups according to I.A. Sternin (2003: 106-110). In this article the communicative behavior of men and women is analyzed on the base of interview as a genre of political discourse. Gender peculiarities of communicative behavior of public figures always attract scholars’ attention and in the works of scholars the stereotypical forms of behavior of female and male are described as well as national and cultural specifics of verbal and nonverbal communication among the representatives of ethnic cultures. Thus, gender communicative behavior is one of the types of socially determined communicative behavior that requires systemic description in political discourse.

The hypothesis of this article is that communicative behavior is gender identified, and this fact is dictated by the choice of speech markers of explicit and implicit linguistic means at all language levels that presented the feminine features in political discourse.

The data for investigation are 400 interviews (1700 lexico-grammatical units) in mass media with female and male-politicians of Kazakhstan, Russia, the USA and Great Britain. These interviews were selected from the central newspapers: “Kazakhstanskaya Pravda”, “Ekho Moskvyy”, “Vzglyad”, “Karavan”, “Pravila igry”, “Megapolis”, “Moskovskiy Komsomolets”, “Megapolis”, “Novoye pokoleniye” and magazines “Zhenshchiny Vostok-Zapad”, “Zerkalo” etc. and internet sources.

In the article the approach of N. Fairclough of critical discourse analysis is implemented that is directed to study the ways of production of social, gender and national inequality (1995: 39-33). In the work “Critical discourse analysis in transdisciplinary research” N. Fairclough considers this transdisciplinary approach as “dialogue between two disciplines or frameworks may lead to a development of both through a process of each internally appropriating the logic of the other as a resource for its own development”. On the base of the above-mentioned analysis the transdisciplinary approach (N. Fairclough) of linguistics and gender studies and integrationist model (Theo van Leeuwen) that focuses on the problems of interpretation of communicative behavior in political discourse the following methods are used in this investigation: political discourse and critical discourse analysis using quantitative and qualitative research.

Political discourse is defined by scholars V.N. Bazylev, E.A. Sheigal etc. as a wide notion, the most accepted is the definition of Baranov A. (1998: 131-145) “the set of discourse practices, identifying the participants of political discourse and forming the definite range of themes of political communication”. According to Van Dijk T.A. (1998: 52) political discourse is a class of genres restricted by the social sphere, and particularly by the sphere of politics. Political discourse is the institutional type discourse accompanying the political act in political context (1998: 43). Wodak R. states that political language is between two poles – the functionally-conditioned special language and the jargon of the social group with the peculiar ideology. So that the political language has to fulfill contradictory functions, from one side, be understandable, and, from the other side, oriented to the relevant group. (1998: 24).

In the combination with other types of institutional and non-institutional types of discourse political discourse has genre modes, among them the place of political interview is in combination of political and mass media discourses. Interview as a genre of political discourse of mass media is a complex communicative phenomenon with the purpose to struggle for power by means of shaping public opinion,

including the text as a verbal result of speech, context-situational and socio-cultural, and also with special linguistic means meeting the goals of discourse.

Thus, the model of communicative behavior can be applied not only for description of national specific of people, but also for any social or professional group. According to I. A. Sternin the main factors that systematize the description of communicative behavior are: commutability, communicative emotionality, ability to contact, way of maintaining of communicative contact, the way of ending the talk, communicative affability, communicative democracy, communicative self-feeding, etiquette of communication, communicative pressure, communicative control, thematic range of conversation, controversy, preferable theme for conversation and type of interlocutor, orientation on the collocutor, communicative distance, physical contact, correlation of verbal and non-verbal communication, gestures, facial expressions, loudness, rate of conversation (2003: 106).

Explicit denotation of ethic features of personality can be met very seldom – more typical for female is the self-presentation through the plot. In comparison with men for women the most specific tactic of female self- presentation is the tactic of positive evaluation of the appearance. For communicative behavior the distinctive feature is the scrupulous attention to the critical utterances they give and the inspiration to avoid the confrontation. The specific stereotypes of female speech behavior are the ways of implicit self-presentation that are connected with the role-position and concerning the density of information the women are hyper informative.

The important component of communicative behavior is theatrical nature of politicians. Contours of “communicative portrait” gives us the ground to determine gender roles of politicians. O.S. Issers outlined the roles of male-politicians and we make the comparative analysis of gender roles with female-politicians and the result is that similar are just the following roles: “patriot”, “an ordinary person”, “family man”, “elected representative” (1999: 198).

Table 1 – Comparative analysis of gender roles of politicians

Roles of male-politicians	Roles of female-politicians
Fighter for social justice	Defender of women’s interests
Patriot	Patriot
Ordinary person	Ordinary person
Family man	Family man
Elected representative	Elected representative
“Strong arm”	Noblesse oblige
	Teacher
	Skillful homemaker
	Loving mother
	Beautiful woman

Ability for contact feature includes the usage of metaphor in political discourse. On the base of the quantitative analysis it is determined what conceptual spheres are most appealed to and the hypothesis of diachronic shift the metaphoric "mosaics" was proved. Formation the metaphors demonstrated by prevalence of "physiological" metaphors (during the period of getting the independence by Kazakhstan).

Nowadays in political communication the women mostly use the conceptual spheres of "nature", alongside with "production" and "physiological", the third place occupy the metaphors of "journey", "spatial" and "military". Gender specific of conceptual spheres are metaphors "objects of house", "family" and "characters of the fairy tales" (the men don not use them at all). The fact of the coincidence of conceptual spheres of men and women proves the redistribution of social power in society and assimilation of the women in political space.

Tolerance includes the explicit and implicit ways of presentation of “Ours”. The quantitative analysis of these data on the material of interviews with women from different lingual cultures and it is shown that high degree of tolerance the American politicians have mostly using the implicit way – deictics. At the same time the Ukrainians and Russians reduced it by means of explicit ways of demonstrating the tolerance. Among the implicit ways is the way of nominalization that is the most appealed to. Specifics of tolerance among Kazakhstani women-politicians is defined by the use explicitness i.e. directness of denotation by means of address – signals of belonging to the group. The results show that in manifestation of tolerance the women-politicians from the USA are on one level with the men-politicians of Kazakhstan. Obviously, Kazakhstani women demonstrate nationally conditioned gender specifics in this aspect of the communication behavior.

The next parameter analyzed is agency and quantitative analysis of explicit and implicit ways of agency among men is higher 2, 5 times in comparison with women in political discourse. It is explained that men in Kazakhstan have more active civil position in society and in this aspect the gender differentiation is explained.

Quantitative analysis of politeness parameter is made on the ways of expression the "positive" and "negative" politeness (2002: 47). Here we study not only syntax maneuvering, but also communicative tactics of answer evasion at pragmatic, semantic, cognitive levels and classification of explicit and implicit ways of topic digression. In political discourse the balance between two social values (involvement in public relations and independence) being a foundation of politeness, the men are more successive in politics but in real life the women are recognized less polite. We have to mention that, in our opinion, for women it is a manifestation of tolerance rather than low degree of confidence in the information they present. Hereunder, the aspect of politeness is in unison with the aspect of tolerance in the model of the communicative behavior that is also gender differentiated in political communication.

As far as the material of investigation is political discourse it is difficult to speak about the great variety of topics but the certain list of themes are determined - “the sphere of activity” and “fight” but women are limited by the notions not at the level of decision-making and during the discussion their questions touch only the inner affairs and health of the nation and surrounding both in direct and in figurative meaning. Men at the conceptual level are extroverted and this professional concept sphere is connected with the relationship with the other states what women seldom discuss. Next interesting fact is a divergence of the notion - "finance" on the conceptual level. For men it correlates with the financial well-being of the state, capital formation by means of the investments, but women, on the contrary, more often think about charity and social programs. In the research of this aspect was shown the national specifics of the image of the woman showing the balance between career and family values for women, herewith for men it is typical the full devotion to the career and work. As a result of this study we defined the thematic specifics of women to matrimonial as well as to ethical nature system.

This aspect of the communicative behavior as power is demonstrated in the control in the process of communication, and given superiority on the territory of power relations is revealed by means of control the topic and initiative in political discourse. The problem of interaction is central in this study and is founded on the interaction of the journalist and the politician and using the tactics and strategies by them solving their communicative goals. The issue is that in mass media interview the initiative always belongs to the journalist, but in political interview, on the opposite, power often has the interviewee i.e. politician. On the material of interviews the frequency of the communication initiatives is difficult to determine, moreover, to correlate with gender aspect.

The degree of communicative leadership among women and men politicians of Kazakhstan in interview as a genre of political discourse in a given aspect was determined, using the term of the mode of dialogue conducting as a complex feature of the speech behavior of interlocutors according to I.N. Borissova, on the base of her formula (2002: 33-45) the communicative tone was calculated and the

following quantitative data are revealed: 1) the mode of dialogue conducting in the political interview is replicating both for women and men, in our opinion, it is connected with the average length of reply in syntagma and according to this data it is a narrative type of dialogue; 2) the communicative leadership of men exceeds the women's 2,7 times. The women-politicians of Kazakhstan concede in leadership aspect and it is connected with national specifics of gender communicative behavior.

## 2. Conclusion

On the base of the results of comparative analysis from the position of gender differentiation it is proved that at this moment of development of linguistic genderology it is studied to what extent the gender factor influences on the processes of communication in comparison with the other extralinguistic factors. Hence, extralinguistic and intralinguistic factors of gender influence have to be taken into consideration in the formation of political discourse, i.e. gender aspect has its own impact on the presentation of lingual image of the social group at all language levels and also on the communicative material.

Thereby the parametric model of description the specifics of gender communicative behavior demonstrates the fact of presence of gender differentiation in modern political discourse on the base of explicit and implicit means of language expression as gender markers that is the data for description of communicative behavior of politician. Therefore, dominant language features of gender communicative behavior are reflected in political interviews which are linguistically peculiar. The results of comparative analysis from the position of gender differentiation let us claim that intensification of gender differentiation of Kazakhstani female-politicians has its own specific and this fact can be explained by the peculiarities of interview as a genre of political discourse. Thus, the hypothesis is confirmed that communicative behavior is gender identified and the results of this research that presented the feminine features in political discourse can serve as means of improvement of social and political dialogue.

## Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without supervising of Elsevier publishing company. We express our gratitude to Akdeniz University for organizing this conference.

## References

- Baranov, A. (1998). *Political Discourse in Transition in Europe 1989-1991*. (pp. 131-145). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. Vol.36.
- Fairclough, N. (2009) *Media discourse*. (224 p.) Publisher: Bloomsbury USA.
- Issers, O. S. (1999). *Communicative tactics and strategies in the Russian language*. (285 p.) Omsk.
- Partington, A. (2002) *The Linguistics of political argument*. (296 p.) NY: Routledge.
- Sternin, I. A. (2003). *The problem of description of gender communicative behavior* // Gender, Language, Culture, Communication: The IIIrd International conference 27-28 November 2003. (pp. 106 – 110). Moscow: Moscow State Linguistic University.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *What is political discourse analysis?* // Political linguistics /Jan Blommaert, Chris Bulcaen (Eds.). (pp. 43-52). Amsterdam.

Wodak, R. (1998). *Special language and jargon: types of the texts with the concept “party program”* // Language. Discourse. Politics. (24- 45). Volgograd.

Borissova, I. N. (2002). *Modes of dialogue conducting and dynamic types of conversation* // Izvestiya the Ural State University. (pp. 33-45). Humanities. Vol. 5 (24).